

Forum on the Standards of Quality

Summary of Comments

May 23, 2006

On May 23, 2006, the Virginia Board of Education held a forum to hear comments from various organizations on potential changes to the Standards of Quality. Groups invited included the: Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia School Boards Association and Limited English Proficiency Caucus, Virginia Education Association, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Virginia Municipal League, and Virginia PTA.

Following is a summary of the comments/recommendations from each organization.

I. Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)

Dr. Al Butler, Executive Director:

A) Standard 2 - Instructional, administrative and support personnel.

- Supports the four staffing initiatives that were included in previous SOQ revisions that were not funded by the General Assembly.

B) General Recommendation

- Supports full funding of the SOQ at levels that are more consistently reasonable in relation to the actual prevailing cost.

1I. Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)

Kate Kaminski, Special Counsel:

A) Standard 8 - Compliance

- Asked that the Board permit the current procedures for ensuring compliance to be tried and found ineffective before instituting new ones.

B) General Recommendation

- Asked that the Board not introduce any new mandates until the current ones are funded.

Allen Griffith, Chair of the VSBA Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Caucus:

A) Standard 2 – Instructional, administrative and support personnel.

- Supports establishing the LEP pupil teacher ratio at 34:1 (29.5/1000).
- Supports the inclusion of 2 positions per 1,000 LEP students to provide ancillary services.

III. Virginia Education Association (VEA)

Princess Moss, VEA President:

A) Standard 1 – Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

- Supports funding compensation and benefits for teachers that will attract and retain highly qualified individuals.
- Supports ensuring teachers' salaries, benefits, and incentives are competitive in the marketplace and sufficient to retain quality personnel.

B) Standard 2 – Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Supports the reduction in class size ratios in all grades by one student each year for the next five years.
- Supports the establishment and requirement for a weighted class size formula for the inclusion of exceptional students in non-exceptional education classes.
- Supports at least one full time librarian for every public school regardless of enrollment numbers.
- Supports one additional librarian for every 500 students above 300 in elementary schools and one additional librarian for every 500 students over 1,000 in middle and high schools.
- Supports one full time library clerical position for 350 students at the elementary level and one additional library clerical position for every additional 600 students. At the middle and high school levels, one additional library clerical position for every 750 students beyond 750.
- Supports daily, unencumbered planning time for elementary teachers.
- Supports addressing the significant amount of time and work involved in testing for accountability.

C) Standard 3 – Accreditation, other standards and evaluation.

- Supports rewarding achievement that is demonstrated on multiple indicators of school and student performance.

IV. Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals

Dr. Tom Shortt, Executive Director:

A) Standard 2 – Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Supports one full time principal in every elementary school.
- Supports one full time assistant principal per 400 students in all schools, K-12.
- Supports reducing the caseload for speech-language pathologists.
- Supports providing for reading specialists at a ratio of one position per 1,000 students to prevent or ameliorate reading deficiencies.

V. Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals

Bet Neale, Director of Government Relations:

A) Standard 2 - Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Supports increasing the number of assistant principals from a ratio of 600 to 1 to a ratio of 400 to 1.
- Supports the three remaining unfunded staffing initiatives included in the Board's previous recommendations to the General Assembly.
- Strongly supports requiring a reading specialist for every 1,000 students.
- Supports the teaching requirement for principal licensure and asks that it not be removed.

B) Standard 5 – Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership.

- Recommends that the Board to explore the professional development activities offered by professional education associations and expand partnership opportunities with them to enhance these critical services for teachers and administrators.

VI. Virginia Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development

Anne Etchison, Executive Director:

A) Standard 2 - Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Supports full funding for reading specialists at 1 per 1000.
- Supports full funding for one principal in every school.
- Supports full funding for assistant principals at 400 to 1.
- Supports a speech language pathologist caseload not to exceed 60 to 1.

B) Standard 5 – Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership.

- Supports language that promotes school division efforts to identify professional development needs and to work in tandem with professional organizations and other school divisions to plan and implement sustained staff development programs.

VII. Virginia Municipal League (VML)

Rhet Tignor, Member, Hampton City Council, and VML Executive Committee member:

A) Standard 1 - Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

- Supports the inclusion of a teacher salary increase in the budget submission to the Governor each year and a more realistic calculation of the costs of meeting the SOQ.
- Supports including more realistic estimates for health insurance premiums for teachers in the budgets submitted to the Governor.
- Supports school alternatives to the normal school environment for students who do not behave appropriately and the development and funding of alternative programs for students suspended and expelled from school.

B) Standard 2 - Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Supports the staffing revisions to the SOQ that were adopted in 2004 but have not been funded by the General Assembly regarding principals, assistant principals, reading specialist and speech language pathologists

C) General Recommendations

- Supports updating the per-pupil grant amount for the Virginia Pre-School Initiative.
- Opposes any maintenance of effort provisions other than those associated with the SOQ.

VIII. Virginia Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Dianne Florence, President, stated that the PTA had no suggestions for changes to the SOQ at this time, but look forward to being included in the later discussion.

She also clarified the status of comments made by the PTA on the Standards of Accreditation.